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Letter dated 18 March 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you that today I received a letter from Mr. Mohammed Bahr Al-Uloom, Interim President of the Iraqi Governing Council (see annex II), and a letter from Mr. L. Paul Bremer, Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (see annex IV), both of which were dated 17 March 2004. The letters which I sent in reply to those communications are reproduced in annexes I and III to this letter.

You will note that the Governing Council has requested the assistance of the United Nations in the formation of an interim Iraqi government, to which sovereignty will be transferred on 30 June 2004, as well as in the preparations for direct elections to be held before the end of January 2005.

You will also note that the Coalition Provisional Authority is fully supportive of the Governing Council's request, and has assured me that it will cooperate closely with the United Nations and the Governing Council to provide the security required for the United Nations to carry out these missions.

It is my intention, therefore, in line with the mandates authorized by the Security Council, and in keeping with the commitment of the United Nations to assist the people of Iraq, as they request, to ask my Special Adviser, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team, as well as an electoral assistance team, to return to Iraq as soon as possible.

The success of their efforts will, of course, require the full support and assistance of the members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you could bring this letter and its annexes to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex I

[Original: English]

Letter dated 18 March 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Interim President of the Iraqi Governing Council

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2004, which I received today. I would also like to thank you for sending me a copy of the Transitional Administrative Law.

I have taken note of the Governing Council's request for the United Nations to lend advice and assistance in the formation of an interim Iraqi government, to which sovereignty will be transferred on 30 June 2004, as well as in the preparations for direct elections to be held before the end of January 2005.

The United Nations remains committed to doing everything within its capacity to assist the people of Iraq, when and as they request. I have therefore asked my Special Adviser, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team, as well as an electoral assistance team, to return to Iraq as soon as possible, in order to lend the advice and assistance you have requested.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks, in advance, to the Governing Council and the Coalition Provisional Authority for providing the security required for the United Nations to carry out these missions.

I am concurrently informing the members of the United Nations Security Council of my intention and am copying this exchange of letters to its President.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

Annex II

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 17 March 2004 from the Interim President of the Iraqi Governing Council addressed to the Secretary-General

The Governing Council is pleased to send you a copy of the Transitional Administrative Law of the Iraqi State, which provides a foundation for Iraq's democracy and paves the way to a permanent constitution. The Law was approved by the Governing Council unanimously and signed on Monday, 8 March 2004.

This Law represents an important step towards the establishment of a democratic, pluralist, federal system. It safeguards basic human rights, which has been a goal of the Iraqi people for years.

We continue to believe that the United Nations must play an important role in Iraq. We thank you, on behalf of the Iraqi people, for sending the United Nations delegation led by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi to Iraq and for the efforts it exerted. The Governing Council appreciates the advice and assistance of the United Nations as we look to the next challenge in the political transition: the formation of an interim Iraqi government to which sovereignty will be transferred on 30 June 2004. We welcome United Nations consultation in the efforts we are exerting in the broad national dialogue regarding the shape and scope of this interim government.

We also look forward to United Nations assistance in providing advice and observations needed to ensure that direct elections are held before the end of January 2005. The experience and capability of the United Nations will be invaluable both in the creation of the infrastructure and in the conduct of the elections.

Time is of the essence to ensure the credible national direct elections take place as scheduled in the Transitional Administrative Law of the Iraqi State.

Please accept our deepest appreciation for the past efforts of the United Nations. We hope that the United Nations will be able to return to Iraq as soon as possible.

(*Signed*) Mohammed Bahr **Al-Uloom**
President, Governing Council

Annex III

Letter dated 18 March 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2004, which I received today.

I have taken note that the Coalition Provisional Authority is fully supportive of the Governing Council's request for the United Nations to lend advice and assistance in the formation of an interim Iraqi government, to which sovereignty will be transferred on 30 June 2004, as well as in the preparations for direct elections to be held before the end of January 2005.

The United Nations remains committed to doing everything within its capacity to assist the people of Iraq, when and as they request. I have therefore asked my Special Adviser, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team, as well as an electoral assistance team, to return to Iraq as soon as possible, in order to lend the advice and assistance that has been requested. They will be in contact with you in the coming days to discuss the details of their arrival.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the Coalition Provisional Authority, in advance, for providing for their security and other logistics support.

I am concurrently informing the members of the United Nations Security Council of my intention and am copying this exchange of letters to its President.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

Annex IV

Letter dated 17 March 2004 from the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority addressed to the Secretary-General

Thank you for sending the fact-finding mission led by Mr. Brahimi to Iraq last month. The Coalition Provisional Authority is deeply grateful for the willingness of the United Nations to respond so quickly to the Iraqi Governing Council's request for assistance.

The Governing Council took an important step towards the establishment of an independent, democratic state with the adoption of the Transitional Administrative Law on 8 March 2004. In a letter dated 17 March addressed to you, it has now invited the United Nations to return to Iraq urgently to assist with both the formation of the interim government and in the preparations for national direct elections. The Coalition Provisional Authority also believes that the United Nations has a significant role to play in assisting Iraq as it continues with this process.

We hope that Mr. Brahimi and his team will be able to return to Iraq as soon as possible to help build consensus among Iraqis on the powers, structure and composition of the interim government and the process for its establishment. We also welcome the advice and assistance of the United Nations in the creation of the electoral infrastructure and hope that the United Nations elections experts will arrive in Iraq early in the week of 21 March.

Let me assure you that we will cooperate closely with the United Nations and the Governing Council to provide the security required for the United Nations to carry out these missions.

We greatly value the commitment of the United Nations to assisting the Iraqi people. I look forward to the return of the United Nations to Iraq as soon as possible.

(*Signed*) L. Paul **Bremer III**
Administrator, Coalition Provisional Authority